

TREATISE ON *HAPPINESS.*

*Look round the busy World, and see how few
Know their own good, and, knowing it, pursue.*

POPE.

Vanum est & breve omne humanum Solatium.

Kempis.



L O N D O N:

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T R E A T I S E, &c.

HERE is nothing which mankind differ so much as in their choice of happiness, all being agreed, that 'tis the most desirable thing, yet the most difficult on earth to be obtained; not because of its being remote, or that it requires such extraordinary search about, but because the fallen state of man makes it so difficult to be obtained and enjoyed.

The design of the following is to put an end to all that restless anxiety which perplexes and disturbs the most noble and learned, as well as the most ignoble and illiterate part of mankind; and surely if it can be proved that there is such real bliss, both here and hereafter, which is capable of affording sufficiency, yea full and complete happiness for every individual soul upon earth, many will at least give their assent, and it is to be hop'd that not a few will be so happy as to be made partakers of that felicity which is proposed in the following treatise.

In order to make the subsequent treatise more plain and clear, I shall divide it under the following several heads:

- 1st*, Shall make it appear that all seek happiness.
- 2^{dly}*, Give the only reasons why they do not find it.
- 3^{dly}*, Shew where it is to be found.
- 4^{thly}*, How it is to be sought for.
- 5^{thly}*, When to be found.
- 6^{thly}*, An invitation to partake of it. And,
- 7^{thly}*, Answer some of those common objections usually made against seeking happiness in religion.

And, *first*, I am to make it appear that all seek happiness. There is a natural bent of the mind, a craving appetite implanted in every man which strongly prompts him to the pursuit of happiness, in search of which he spares no pains to obtain what he has in view; whatever he supposes will procure him satisfactory pleasure; so evident is this assertion, that we find whatever men esteem their chief delight, they will hazard their lives in the pursuit of it; their time and their affections are wholly engaged in the search and expectation of it. Take a cursory view of the bulk of mankind, and you will easily perceive what variety of methods are invented to satisfy their boundless thirst of happiness, so that reason and conscience are often opposed and smothered if the end can be gained which they have in view. For, though all pursue happiness, yet most are disappointed, not being guided by the rules of reason and conscience; for the generality of people seek happiness only in the things of this world, which can afford no true bliss: besides if they could, are so short-lived that they perish in the using, and which they are sure to leave behind at the hour of death. To advise such to seek happiness in God, while riches

riches, pleasures, and honour, are their three grand idols, would be thought impertinency; there are various other means used, which are equally insufficient to make men happy, though not criminal in themselves, viz. various arts and sciences, travelling in foreign countries, prying into the secrets of nature, digging up the bowels of the earth, and penetrating into the nature of the celestial orbs, music, books, &c. yea almost as various are the ways which men employ themselves in to obtain happiness, as there are persons in the pursuit of it: and withal, these are so unsettled and unsatisfactory that people continually are changing what they once embraced with eagerness, finding it beginning to cloy them, and again are as anxious, and as fully bent upon something which at present appears desirable. From hence we may clearly see that all men seek happiness, and every one for himself must confess he is the man. But in the pursuit of all the above-mentioned methods, which mankind labour in to obtain their end: Do they find it? This is the point, which I know you'll answer me in the negative. I will now

2dly, Give you the only reasons why you do not find it, why you do not obtain what you *so* eagerly pursue. And in short it is, because you seek it where it is not to be found, and neglect to seek it where it is to be found. If we were not immortal beings we should find happiness in the pursuit of the afore-mentioned schemes; but remember, thou hast an immortal spirit, which is capable of knowing, loving, and enjoying God to all eternity; therefore you must have something adequate to your capacities and endowments to make you happy. You are to live for ever in heaven or hell; surely then nothing

nothing finite can satisfy an everlasting spirit. Consider, I beseech you, all the methods you invent to find happiness in are for the body, not for the soul. The care and pains which most people take for their bodies, to please and gratify their appetites and senses, would make an impartial man conclude, that such people thought they had no souls; for most certainly they live as without God in the world. My friends, you need not wonder that you are unhappy, for, by seeking happiness where it is not to be found, therefore you find it not. How absurd a part do you act against reason and common sense, if you, who have souls which will never perish, neglect to seek their proper happiness, and only aim after happiness in perishable things ! The very beasts prosper better than you, they were made for this world, and therefore they have and enjoy what their natures crave. Alas ! man, how art thou fallen ! how deplorable is thy condition ! how degenerated, and involved in misery ! how lost to all sensibility of thy real estate ! how is thy character pictured out in holy writ ! how justly art thou compared to a lost sheep ; for thou art wandered from God, from Christ thy true shepherd, from heaven thy native abode, into a forlorn, wretched and miserable world; so that thou, like the prodigal, art at a loss to return to thy father's house, having no guide to direct you, nor any one to assist you ; so that thou contentest thyself to feed upon the husks of riches, pleasures and honour for happiness, but thanks be to God, who has mercifully put it out of their power to satisfy thee, in order that thou shouldest come to thyself, and return to thy father's house.

As was before observed, the generality of mankind pursue happiness in riches, pleasure and honour. These are the three chief idols adored almost

most over the whole earth; not to speak of thy devilish nature which sets thee at the utmost distance from real good, (which entirely involves you in present misery and utterly incapacitates you for happiness) thy pride, anger, envy, malice, revenge, lying, swearing, defrauding, sabbath-breaking, &c. but only let us consider thy earthly or animal nature how thou art chained down to these inferior, these base, these deceitful phantoms, and try whether, by the due considering these three motives of action, we shall not easily make it appear that thou art miserable, and that thou canst not be happy till thy heart is weaned from these idols, these Dalilahs, which are so far from making thee happy, that they prevent thy being so. You will observe it is not out of bare assertion but upon clear proof from reason, scripture and experience, that I shall search out the cause why men miss of happiness in the pursuit of riches, pleasure, and honour. These are eagerly sought for by most, in order to obtain happiness, but they deceive as many as pursue them, or look for it in them: And one would think the experience of so many years should convince men that all these are only the shadows of happiness, and consequently would discourage them from seeking them so earnestly, and look more for the substantial pleasure, for real bliss. Can riches, so called, make a man happy? they can as soon make him immortal. Can the heaping up treasures upon earth, can thousands of gold and silver satisfy the boundless desires of an immortal soul? 'tis impossible, 'tis inconsistent with reason to think so. How inconsistent is that man with himself, who supposes it reasonable and commendable to lay up treasures upon earth in order to obtain happiness, when wisdom declares 'tis impossible they should

should make him happy ? What is there in money which so charms, which so fatally allures the souls of men, even to make them forget the design of their being sent into the world ? Does not *riches make themselves wings and fly away* ? Do they not generally disappoint your expectations ? yet observe, it is not money itself which makes thee miserable, it is the love of it, the desiring it for its own sake, the trusting in it for help and happiness, the expecting that from it which only God can give. Oh ! thou lord of the creation, how art thou fallen ! how is thy dignity debased, how are thy affections clogged and encumbered, how low are thy aims, where is now thy ambition, where is now thy honour, where is now thy happiness ? Thou hast lost all, thou art engendered in sin, thou art a fallen creature, yea, so deeply fallen, that thou, amazing truth ! appliest even to money to make thee happy. Well then, art thou happy ? Have you found what you so long and so eagerly pursued ? I may venture to answer for thee and declare thou still remainest unhappy and miserable ; and so thou wilt, if thou continuest but a little longer in the condition thou art in, for ever and ever : for remember thou art to die, how soon thou knowest not, perhaps within a year, a month, a week, a day, for who knows what a day may bring forth ; and then thou, alas ! thou must leave all thy wealth behind thee ; thou must leave thy riches to others, for thou canst carry nothing away with thee. Well then, what avails all thy riches at thy dying hour, nothing at all, or worse than nothing ; if thy heart is wedded to them, thou wilt be loth to part with them, for thou partest with what thou dependest entirely upon, but quit them thou must, and that for ever : Therefore I argue, if riches have not made thee happy ever

ever since thou hast been pursuing them, or had them in possession; if they have made no one happy, if thou canst not carry them away with thee, if they will neither serve for help nor happiness, if they leave thee when you die, at a time when you need the most clearing and reviving prospect, 'tis the height of folly to depend upon them for those ends, therefore *awake thou that sleepest*, thou that sayest *soul take thy ease*, (in the dream of seeking happiness or contentment in this world) and *arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee life.*

Let us now take a view of that idol PLEASURE, which has more votaries than the former, because all have it not in their power to lay up treasure upon earth, yet most, if not all, have it in their power to depend upon pleasures, so called, for happiness. But are they happier than the former? Do they succeed better in their attempts? In general men heap up riches in order to obtain pleasure, but do they find it? In this respect do riches befriend you or not? if they did, your happiness would be proportionable to your riches; and consequently, the richest man would be the happiest man. And as for those who have no affluence or abundance of worldly wealth, do they find pleasure sufficient to satisfy their desires? Do they in all the inventions which the wit of man can contrive independent of God find happiness? I am bold to declare they do not. Can the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, and the pride of life, give you the least degree of real happiness? Alas no, 'tis true they have the art of winning your affections, of debasing your nature, and burying you in sensuality; and this is all the happiness they afford you. My dear friends, is it possible that eating, drinking, and sleeping, plays, operas, and assemblies, cards, dancing

and musick, &c. can give you rest, or contentment, or happiness? call it which you please, for I am not criticising about modes of speech, but am aiming at your soul, to have it made what God originally intended it should be, *viz.* holy and happy.

Was you ever really happy one hour all your life? so happy as that you were willing to die, if God should require your soul of you? If not, where is your boasted happiness? If you are not resign'd to the will of God, in all circumstances and conditions of life; all your titles, your treasures, your high living, avail nothing; because they do not forward your happiness. You have labour'd for riches with the utmost eagerness, and for what? Why, to purchase what will please your affections, your appetite, your senses, your imaginations. Well, suppose you have gain'd an abundance of wealth, does it answer your expectation? No, still you cannot but say,

“ Amidst our plenty, something still
 “ To me, to thee, to him is wanting;
 “ That cruel something unpossest,
 “ Corrodes and leavens all the rest.

Prior.

Makes every thing insipid and irksome, so as to set your inventions continually on the rack to find some new amusement. What occasions that, which you call, *lowness of spirits*, which most people have at times? tho' in fact, it is often not so, it is only this; you are at a loss for something new to give you some little pleasure, and therefore you grow dull and melancholy. Alas! what signifies all your hurry and bustle, while you remain still dissatisfied, discontented and miserable? surely this pleasure, as it is call'd, is misery to the soul; and this freedom is

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the utmost slavery. I know when it is you think yourself happy, but your thinking yourself happy, is no proof of your being so; there is many a mad-man who looks upon himself a king, but his thinking himself a king, is no proof of his being a king: So you, when you have things go as you would have them; if you enjoy your own ease, if you prosper in your worldly affairs, and are, as you term it, happily married; if you can indulge yourselves with variety of food and plenty; if nothing crosses you; if you can enjoy what you desire; frequent plays, assemblies, &c. then you think yourselves happy; but you are no more happy, and equally deceive yourselves, as much as that mad-man who thinks himself a king, while he is in chains. My friends, when you are indulging yourselves in the above manner, are you happy in God's account? quite the contrary, for he hath declar'd, *He that liveth in pleasure, is dead while he liveth*: He is so drown'd in stupidity and sensuality, that he is totally dead to God; for his spiritual senses and affections are dead, and he is only alive to the world. Again, he is not prepar'd for death, and therefore cannot be happy.

Let us now briefly consider, what HONOUR can do, to supply the deficiency of riches and pleasure, in order to satisfy the craving thirst of happiness, so deeply engraven on the human heart. Mankind in general are so opinionated of themselves, that when God does bless them with gifts and endowments, they make them destructive to their own happiness; by ascribing to themselves that praise, which is only due to God; not considering that saying of the Apostle, *Who made thee to differ from another? and what hast thou, which thou hast not receiv'd? and if thou hast receiv'd it, why do you glory as if you had not receiv'd it?* Now the sinfulness of this honour or

vain-glory, lies in robbing God of his due ; *who will not give his glory to another.* It is besides, vain and transitory, it will soon vanish as a vapour : Men are so fond of being prais'd or admir'd, that generally the greatest flatterer meets with more success, than those who deserve to be respected, because they praise others, in order to be esteemed and praised themselves ; while the truly respectful are backward in praising others to their faces, knowing it engenders pride. How common is it for men to boast of their birth, their parentage, their fortune, their health, strength, goods, &c. if they are a little above the common level of mankind ; but if otherwise, viz. poor, how ashamed of their parents, their birth, their education, &c.

There is nothing more coveted, nor any thing more destructive of happiness, than this ; so that you often may see men of fortune, yea, others also, most miserable, when they find themselves slighted or neglected by their fellow-creatures. But what avails the honour which cometh from men, which is attended with such racking torture and distress ? The respect which most men express for each other, perishes with the expressing it ; 'tis barely formal, ceremonial and hypocritical : There is none so miserable as the ambitious ; the vain-glorious ; the seeker of honour and reputation, because he is so disgusted when he meets with the least disrespect. It carries its own torment along with it, which makes it detrimental, and totally destructive of true joy. To be in authority, to be the darling of mankind, to be esteem'd by all, is certainly very pleasing to flesh and blood ; but what does it signify, if I ascribe that to myself, which others ascribe to me, if I am conscious I am quite undeserving of it ? besides, worldly applause lasts but for a moment, and is gone

gone for ever. We continually hear people say, and it is the language of most people's hearts : If I was in such authority, or had such an estate, or were in such an employment, how happy should I be ; what good would I do ; how charitable would I be ; when they give themselves the lie, by not now *being merciful after their power*, in the station they are now in : When they have attain'd their wish, how contrary do they act ! still they remain as uncharitable as before, and their good intentions only floated in their heads ; while their hearts remain as averse to love or charity as ever : It was only their ambition which prompted them thus to vent their desire ; while it was so ashamed of appearing in naked simplicity, that it is forc'd to put on the disguise of charity, to keep it in countenance.

I hope by this time, you plainiy see, why men are not happy ; because they seek it, where it cannot be found.

I shall now, by the help of God, in the *third* place, shew you where it is to be found.

After all your restless pursuits, yet grievous disappointments ; behold I shew you the thing which you long for, the one thing needful ; where you may find all that is capable of giving you real happiness, even in *Jesus Christ*, the second person in the adorable Trinity ; who left the throne of his father's glory, and came into the world to seek and to save us poor lost sinners ; and is now in heaven, pleading his merits for us : These words, tho' very few, are very comprehensive ; and could I but persuade you of the truth of my assertion, what joy would it afford me : despise not my offer, neither reject my invitation ; at least not 'till I have explain'd to you how he can make you happy, and altogether so. I assure you, from my own and many thousands experience,

(many)

(many of whom are now living, while others are already in paradise, adoring their blessed Saviour, waiting for the complete salvation of both soul and body,) that he can give you real, present, abiding happiness, and he alone. He is the life of the soul ; which is as much kept alive, thro' his divine grace, as our bodies are with due sustenance. I will a little delineate his character, that you may admire his love ; and be charm'd with his comeliness. This is he, *who is able and willing to save to the uttermost, all who come to him* : yea, to make you holy and happy in time and eternity ; when you have despair'd of happiness, after having been totally disappointed. I will quote scripture, for the positive proof of what I advance ; and then leave it to your consideration, to chuse him who is altogether lovely. We will consider a few of the various states and conditions of mankind, and then refer to the holy scripture, to shew you, how exactly suited he is to all our wants and necessities. Do you thirst for happiness ? Hear what he says in *Isaiah*, iv. 1. *Ho ! every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters ; and he that hath no money, come ye, buy and eat, yea, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price.* Are you weary of seeking rest or happiness and finding none ? accept this invitation from his gracious lips : *Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest*, Matt. xi. 28. Are you poor ? He will give you gold tried in the fire : Rev. iii. 18. Are you naked ? He will give you white raiment that you may be cloathed, Rev. iii. 18. Are you ignorant ? *He will make you wise unto salvation*, 2. Tim. iii. 15. Are you fatherless ? *He is a father of the fatherless*, Psalm, lxviii. 5. Are you afflicted ? *In all your afflictions, he is afflicted*, Heb. iv. 15. Are you

you sinful and guilty, and want atonement to be made for you ; behold, *He ever liveth to make intercession for you ; who bore your sins in his own body on the tree*, Heb. vii. 25. Are you enslav'd to sin ? *He will set you at liberty*, Isaiah, lxi. 1. Are you weak and feeble ? *He will strengthen you with all might, by his spirit, in your inner man*, Eph. iii. 16. Have you no friend to direct you ? *He is the wonderful counsellor*, Isaiah, ix. 8. Are you sick of sin, longing to be heal'd of its deadly plague ? *He is the physician of souls*, Matt. ix. 12. In short, my dear friends, there is nothing in you, or about you, that prevents your happiness, but he can and will remove ; and there is nothing which you need, to complete your happiness, but he will certainly give you : In him you may find full and complete happiness ; but without him, nothing but disappointment and delusion. Learn of me, saith Christ, for I am meek and lowly in heart ; and would we but learn this of him, such peace and pleasure, such satisfaction and delight, would arise, as would abundantly satisfy the pains and difficulties of learning it. For who so happy on earth, as the man who is of an humble, meek, loving disposition ; who delights to smile on all around him ; who is never so pleas'd, as when he is communicating favours and kindness to every one, whether friends or enemies. He is so meek, that he offends no one wilfully, and so reconcil'd to affronts, that he bears all the venom of tongues, and malice of his bitterest enemies, with composure and tranquility of mind ; knowing, that in doing this, he is treading in the steps of his blessed master and Saviour ; and where he is, there shall he be also : Are you desirous, as I know you are, to enjoy all the blessings of this life ? then you must get him to be your friend, who has all power in heaven and earth.

earth. You must have an interest in all that Christ hath done and suffer'd, to recover lost souls. You must taste the loving-kindness of the Lord ; and see the merciful hand, which deals out these common blessings to you ; and then, and not before, will you be capable of being thankful for them. If at present your hopes and fears, your desire, your love, your delight, your relish are for the pleasures of this life, tho' they are very inferior and bear no proportion to more noble and divine joys : Yea, if your confidence is in gold, your delight in pleasing your imagination, your appetite, your senses, in plays, in opera's, in routs, in horse-racing, in assemblies, in dancing, in excess of eating and drinking, fine houses, gay furniture and dress, be not surpriz'd that you remain dissatisfied and restless ; for in the nature of things you cannot be otherwise.

But I earnestly intreat you, for the sake of your precious and immortal souls, that you now begin to undeceive yourselves ; try the experiment which I shall recommend to you. I have shewn you where happiness is to be found ; yea, full, complete, abiding, uninterrupted happiness ; so full and plenteous that it will satisfy the utmost longings of your thirsty soul. So copious, that there is a balm for every wound ; and so free, that it is even now ready to be convey'd to you. Well then ; I hope many of you begin to see your error, to feel your misery, to dread your danger ; for tho' I have not much alarm'd you with the everlasting destruction which is preparing for you, unless you repent and turn to God ; yet now declare I unto you, that if you live and die in your sins, you'll die to all eternity ; or you will live a never dying life in everlasting torments : I hope, by this time, you will begin to take the advice of one who sincerely loves you, and who,

write

writes this purely for your advantage : For be assur'd, if you do not take warning by this ; if you will not be convinc'd, but continue to live an earthly, sensual, devilish life, this will increase your condemnation, at that day, when the secrets of all hearts will be unfolded, and you shall stand naked before the tribunal of an angry, sin-avenging God : Then we may suppose he will say to you, as he did in the days of his flesh, *How often would I have gather'd thee, as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not?* And my friends, would you doubt of Christ's willingness to save you, consider the many passages of scripture before cited ; and look upon this, as a fresh message from God, to invite you to be happy ; for it certainly is so, however you may receive it : If any do feel their misery, and find the insufficiency of all worldly pleasure, riches and honour to make them happy : If you have any desire or inclination to accept of the offer'd mercy, and are at a loss how to obtain it : I will (with the help of God)

aptly. Shew you how it is to be sought for.

But first, in order to give you some encouragement to seek it earnestly, I must remind you a little of its value. The happiness I am persuading you to, is not like that this world promises you, *fading and unsatisfactory, and uncertain.* Its ripeness and maturity commences, as it were, when worldly minded men's sickens and dies. This endures when time shall be no more, even thro' all the endless ages of eternity ; it is satisfactory ; it is adequate to all the capacities and faculties of your soul : It is to know, to love, to be happy in God ; it is to live for ever with him ; it is to be deliver'd from the curse which hangs over your heads ; it is to be reinstated

into the favour of God ; to recover the image of God ; to be happy and content in all circumstances of life. It is to be deliver'd from the slavery of sin ; from the evil that is in the world : It is to have all your wants supplied ; all your sickness cured ; all your pure desires satisfied : Surely if this will not engage your attention to the directions which I am going to give you, nothing will ; you must be stupid, insensible indeed, and past all feeling ; and this happiness is certain, as thousands to their comfort will find. You must repent and believe the gospel, if you would be partaker of this supreeme happiness : And if this is all, perhaps you think you either have done this, or can very easily do it when you please : But alas ! you are quite mistaken ; the repentance which I am going to describe to you must come from the heart ; it must be a loathing and abhorring sin ; it must be to feel your misery, your sins and wickedness, to find it a sore burden too heavy for you to bear ; to mourn and be afflicted ; to see sin in its hideous colours. But this you cannot do of yourself ; your heart is too hard, and your conscience too much feared : Therefore you must go to the throne of grace, to the blood of sprinkling, to the fountain open'd for sin and uncleanness : You must seek the grace of repentance from JESUS CHRIST ; saying, Lord ! help me to abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes : Lord ! I am a vile sinner, unworthy of the least drop of mercy : God be merciful to me a sinner ; give me unfeigned repentance, a repentance not to be repented of. And as for believing the gospel, this also you cannot do of yourself, and therefore must seek help from JESUS CHRIST : For it is not a bare assent to the truths delivered in the holy scriptures ; but it is believing with the heart that JESUS CHRIST came into

into the world to save *you*, the chief of sinners. It is appropriating to yourself all that JESUS CHRIST hath done and suffer'd for you. It is receiving him in all his offices as Prophet, Priest and King: It is knowing your misery and applying to him for happiness: It is feeling your spiritual sickness and disease, and applying to him who is the physician of souls: It is feeling your wants and seeking relief from him: It is looking unto him continually, waiting, expecting and longing for a blessing. There must likewise accompany all this, a continual attendance upon all the ordinances of God; reading, prayer, fasting, receiving the holy sacrament, and keeping constant to the service of the church. You must likewise forsake all your sins, you must shake them off, as St. *Paul* did the viper. You must abstain from all appearance of evil. You must no longer frequent play-houses, masquerades and other places of diversion; but seek with all your heart 'till you find the pearl of great price, and be not weary of waiting for it; tarry thou the Lord's leisure, in due time he will speak peace to your soul, and give you plenteous redemption thro' his blood. Be importunate with God; his ear is not heavy, he will soon come, he will not tarry; the longer he delays to answer your requests, the more abundantly will he give you those things you need, in his own time: Therefore be not discouraged, be not faint in your minds; beware of running again into the world, it has deceiv'd you too much already: Surely you need not now be caution'd to beware of applying to riches, pleasure and honour to make you happy; you have found they cannot: God has mercifully put it out of their power; so that they have not afforded you the least grain of solid happiness, during the long time your affections were deeply fix'd upon

them. Yet I know the love of the creature is rooted in the heart, and that there is a strong propensity to cleave to some beloved idol ; therefore I must intreat you to bear with me a little : Tho' you may in a great degree have shaken off your three grand enemies, the world, the flesh and the devil, yet there are many things which will endeavour to prevent your resting fully in Christ for help and for happiness ; so that you must watch and pray continually : You must beg of God that he would not let you rest short of Christ ; also, that he would keep, defend and preserve you : Groan earnestly for peace : But beware of speaking peace to your soul, when there is no peace : You will be very liable to do this : Satan will be very busy with you, he will endeavour to persuade you all is well, when you know little or nothing of the power of godliness. He will try to make you think yourself a disciple of Christ, when you have only the form of godliness, being quite destitute of the power. I beseech you to watch against this, thousands go thus far and no farther : They abstain from open, gross, notorious sins ; they go to church or meeting, and sometimes receive the sacrament ; they give a little to the poor ; they are formal, regular and decent, and so conclude they have made their peace with God, have purchas'd heaven, and are now ripe for glory. When alas ! they are only painted sepulchres, while their hearts remain earthly, sensual, devilish. Oh ! my friends, this babel building must come down, and you must go much farther before you can see the kingdom of God in glory. What avails your being a pharisee, an outside christian, a formalist, a self-deceiver ? it would be much better for you, if you could make the publican's prayer the language of your heart ; *God be merciful to me a sinner !* read the

xviiith chap. of St. Luke, and there you will see who is approv'd of and accepted by God, the proud, conceited pharisee, or the self-abasing publican; perhaps you think this is all chimera, that it is impossible Satan should so deceive you. But are you not so deceiv'd already? What do you depend upon for acceptance with God? Do you not think you shall inherit heaven by your doing something, and Christ doing the rest? It is very probable, you have concluded you must do no harm, and live as good as you can, and then Christ is to supply your deficiency. If this is your case, it is very deplorable and dangerous, this is making Christ an half Saviour, which in effect is to make him none at all to you; for he will save you wholly, or not at all. He is the alpha and omega, the beginning and the end; you cannot take one step in the way to his kingdom without him, and therefore you are far gone out of the way, if you suppose you are near heaven, without the righteousness, strength and help of Christ: deceive not your own souls; you had better honestly confess that you trust to your own doings and deservings for acceptance with God, than perish for ever. Think me not your enemy because I tell you the truth; because I counsel you as a friend; because I warn you of resting short of Jesus Christ for wisdom, righteousness, sanctification and redemption; for help and for happiness. If any of you are in distress and anguish of soul, tarry thou the Lord's leisure: *Tho' heaviness may endure for a night, yet joy cometh in the morning.* Christ will assuredly speak peace to your soul, his promises are true; for he came to *preach the gospel to the poor, to heal the broken hearted; to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind; to set at liberty them that are bruised.* Look for his first coming, and

and he will give you the oil of joy for mourning, and the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness. Old Simeon waited for the consolation of Israel, and he waited till he came into the world, and then he rejoic'd in spirit. Mary Magdalen waited at the sepulchre, and Christ appear'd and chear'd her drooping spirit. Be encourag'd then by these examples, and be assur'd the same Jesus, who comforted them, will also comfort you ; by giving you his justifying grace to pardon you ; and his sanctifying grace to purify you ; till by his glorifying grace he makes you entirely holy and compleatly happy in heaven.

*Know God, and teach thy soul to know
The joys which from religion flow.*

5thly, I will now, by the aid of God's spirit, acquaint you with the time when this happiness is to be found, which I have been urging you to seek after ; the sensibility of it is to some sooner, to others later. There are some who groan under the burden of sin, and a sense of the wrath of God many years ; yet this is but seldom the case ; generally the Lord soon bursts through the cloud of anguish and distress, by speaking peace to the troubled soul, and immediately there is a calm. Yea, he removes all the dread of the wrath of God ; the doubts, fears and scruples of the soul, relating to its being in the favour of God, and this he does by removing your heaviness, and by giving you peace and joy. And lest the joy which you sometime may have should prove a delusion, something spun from a warm, lively imagination ; always remember that he gives his sanctifying grace, (tho' but in a small measure,) at the same time : So that when you find your doubts and fears vanish away, you also find the love of God

God shed abroad in your heart, and also power to avoid committing outward sin. And not only this, but peace rules there, hope springs up in the soul, and the graces of the spirit begin to bud and blossom as a rose : Then it is that we have *God's spirit witnessing with our spirits that we are the children of God.* Also we have the *testimony of a good conscience ; and if our hearts condemn us not, then have we confidence towards God.*

We dare not say we have no sense or knowledge of forgiveness of our sins in this life ; thousands there are at this day who know by the above marks, that they are in the favour of God, because the God of peace reigns in their souls. They have power over all sin ; they have the image of God stamp'd upon their hearts ; they are content, holy and happy. *Lord make us all so.*

I will now in the 6th place invite you to partake of real happiness.

I would hope that after being shewn a faint resemblance of the happiness I have been urging you to partake of, you will resolve, by divine grace, to seek for it. But knowing how backward men are to regard what has been propos'd, and how unwilling to believe that to be their happiness, their true interest, which alone is so, being strongly prejudic'd against it : I will argue with you a little, and endeavour to persuade you to accept of the propos'd happiness. You have seen that all pursue happiness, likewise you have been shewn why they do not find it. You have also been shewn where it is to be found. You have been shewn also how you may attain it ; and therefore I trust many of you need no invitation to partake of it. However, permit

permit me, my dear friends, to press it home to your consciences : And may the holy spirit apply it with power.

If you are unholy, prophane or ungodly, you cannot be happy, and while you remain thus, it is impossible you should be otherwise than miserable ; for besides the stings and remorse of a guilty conscience ; besides the fear which torments your soul ; besides the feeling yourself-unhappy, and the dread which you have at the thoughts of death : In a short time you must appear before the awful tribunal of Christ, and receive the punishment justly due to you ; for mercy refus'd will certainly be attended with justice inflicted ; and to describe the extremity of misery which will be inflicted on all who reject the offers of salvation, is impossible, it is beyond description : Escape then for your life, and flee to Jesus the fountain of happiness. I suppose many of you are civil, moraliz'd people ; yet what does all this avail if you are still unhappy ! If your morality has not made you happy ! you find this has deceived you. But I hope you'll find also by experience, my method, or rather God's method, will not. Suppose a person in winter expos'd to every degree of misery, which the inclemency of the cold season necessarily exposes him to ; suppose him hungry, cold and naked, almost starved to death with hunger, ready to perish with cold, and almost benumb'd for want of apparel to cloath him ? now suppose this person had a friend who offer'd to feed and cloath him ; yea that this friend was willing, not only to give him bread to eat and raiment to put on, but also to make him partake of all his house afforded, do you think he would refuse his kind offers ? Do you not rather think he would leap for joy in having such offers ? Yes certainly ; you would think the man a mad-man were

were he to refuse or reject such kindness. Well then, I assure you, unless you accept of the offer'd mercy, in condemning him you condemn yourself; for whatever, or however you may think of yourself, you are in a much more deplorable condition than him above described, and your character is beautifully pictur'd out in *Psalm* cvii. 4, 5. and glad should I be if the *sixth* verse was also applicable to you. You have, for many years, been seeking happiness in the things of this world, but they have not answer'd your expectation. You have altogether been disappointed, and you still remain discontented, restless and unhappy; and not you only, but all around you. There is not a person upon earth but is also disappointed as you are, who seek for happiness as you do. Perhaps you may think I am endeavouring to persuade you against sense and reason, but, think what you will, I know I am not. I know very well that worldly riches, pleasure and honour are very pleasing to our nature, as they carry much of the appearance of happiness in them, but yet it is only in appearance; for they have all along and altogether proved vain and shadowy, and so far from affording you true pleasure, they have render'd you quite incapable of relishing it; and the reason is obvious, as has been before observ'd; because they sensualize the soul, and were not design'd by God to make you happy; and consequently, if they were not design'd by God to make you happy, they cannot make you happy; for this is to make God (who is perfect wisdom) to act more absurd and foolish than fallen man, which is gross blasphemy: Also it is giving power to that which God has given none to, which cannot be, as all things receive their virtue from God as their original. My dear friends, be persuaded to be happy, be persuaded to seek for higher delights; the joys of an-

gels ; yea, the enjoyment of God : This, and this alone is true felicity, is sweet content, to love God and man ; to be meek, lowly, heavenly-minded, this constitutes the christian character, and this is real bliss. Behold I shew you a mystery hitherto hid from your eyes, and unintelligable to your understandings : If you venture your souls upon seeking happiness in JESUS CHRIST, then, oh ! then you'll begin to use the world, and to taste, yea, to partake more fully of all the happiness it affords, than the most voluptuous sensualist ever pretended to ; for to enjoy this world, is to despise it. Blessed be the mercy of our God, who makes all outward, sensible, visible things, means to enable the soul to attain higher advancements in holiness and happiness. Did you, who are worldly-minded, who are so sunk in sensual pleasures, and so debas'd by them, that you neither can conceive, nor relish the thoughts of supernatural divine pleasures ; yet did you but experience the joys, the content, the pleasure, which the disciples of Christ partake of, by being united to him by living faith : You would also with them despise the world ; for tho' I grant that this world does afford some little pleasure to the senses, yet it is chiefly to those who seek it dependent on God ; otherwise they will clog the soul, and prevent its thirsting after rational and spiritual enjoyments : For tho' you do perhaps experience some little pleasure, yet its being fading and transitory, takes off its value, and if it keeps you from higher delights, what does it avail ? Not to mention those more criminal pleasures which many people are enslav'd to, and which certainly are full of more deadly poison, and which entirely incapacitate the soul from present and future happiness. You must allow me, that the pleasures of reason are far superior to the pleasures of sense, and if you allow me this, (which you must do upon rational

rational principles) then you act inconsistent with reason, and against the clearest light of conscience ; by preferring the pleasures of sense, before the pleasures of reason. I know full well it is not an easy thing to make you believe that there is no happiness in the pleasure, riches and honour which this world vainly promises ; and therefore I intreat you thes more to take my advice, 'till your own happy ex-perience convinces you that religion's ways are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace. But as I suppose many objections will be made against what I have been urging you to, I will now answer a few of them ; and may the Holy Spirit make my arguments useful to remove your objections.

7thly, One objection against seeking pleasure in religious paths is, because it is look'd upon as morose, dull and heavy, and therefore to be shunn'd; but why is it thus look'd upon? only, because men do not enter into the spirit of it, nor try impartially as they ought to do, as they would do any thing which they knew would procure them riches or honour ; they take it for granted, because their neighbours say so, and their own corrupt hearts, by the instigation of the devil, suggests to them so. But surely this objection may easily be answer'd ; for if there is that peace, joy, comfort, happiness and contentment in religion, which I have before shewn, then certainly it is not a dull and heavy, but a chearful and joyful life ; you need not take my word for a proof of this, do but consult the scriptures, and the experience of all who have tried this method, and they will abundantly testify, that the comforts they now enjoy, as far exceed those they before took up with, as angelical does beastial delights ; away then with this childish objection, which is easily silenc'd, only by examining and abiding by the testimony of

the above witnesses, *viz.* In the scriptures which in the passages before cited abundantly declare this truth ; and also by the contentment, the resignation and peace which possesses the souls of the dear children of God ; and this also does by the bye, verify the scriptures quoted, as well as speak to the consciences of all men. This is a double cord which cannot be broken, and will certainly serve to convince all gainsayers. Who are so satisfied with the station of life in which they are plac'd in as the real christians ? Who delight to be useful to others as they do ? Who rejoices more than them in afflicting circumstances ? Well might the heathens of old cry out, “ These christian dogs how happy they are ! ” But perhaps you deny or doubt at least of what I insist upon ; because you may have seen them mourning, grave and serious : Why, my friend, the occasion of your stumbling at this is, because you are utterly unacquainted with the divine life, as well as with the oracles of God ; (for I speak all along to people dead in sin) *Who are lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God.* Our Lord says, *Blessed are they that mourn, for they shall be comforted,* Matt. v. 4. And oh ! what a happy mourning is that which obtains a blessing from God ; yea, such a blessing, as to be made partakers of the benefits and blessings of the gospel, which are not only innumerable, but also invaluable ; not only present, but also eternal ; to be made children of God and heirs of glory. Oh ! what blessings are these, besides the blessings which always accompany, and are the issues thereof, such as contentment, hope and love, which are a foretaste of the joys of heaven, and fill the soul with unutterable delight. I will hope that this objection may be silenc'd, and therefore proceed to a second, which is ; because the pleasures of this life are very delightful : This is strengthened by the former

mer supposition, *viz.* That the pleasures ~~are~~ are few or none. But alas ! what pleasure does this world afford which is so *very delightful*? The pleasures of a sensualist, the living in voluptuousness, the pleasing your appetites with variety of meats and drinks, the delighting in fine houses, fine furniture, fine gardens, gay equipage, these are the things which afford you pleasure ; the making a figure in life, the having abundance of wealth, the being in authority, the living at ease ; these are all the springs of your happiness, the only fountains from whence proceeds all thy delight, while the soul is totally forgot, or amazingly neglected ; and if so, how miserable art thou ? Thy pleasure is, and will be thy pain ; yea, thy imaginary happiness will prove thy real misery : Surely you are convinc'd (if experience can convince you) of the utter insufficiency of one and all these things to give you lasting, solid happiness ; and this is all you have, unless you apply to cards, plays, assemblies, horse-racing, &c. to help you out. But alas ! what shall these avail when God says, *This night shall thy soul be requir'd of thee.* Then to be void of the power of godliness, and of the happiness of a religious life, is the utmost misery and distress which can possibly be conceiv'd this side the grave. Can that be term'd pleasure which will incur the displeasure of the Almighty ? No, it cannot. Is it the part of a reasonable man to do that, which will assuredly bring upon him the utmost extremity of torture ? But be assur'd, that the living in pleasure, the being only pleas'd, yea, chiefly pleas'd with the things of this world, will displease God, and in time draw upon you inevitable destruction.

A *third* objection which men make against living a holy life is, because they are told they must repent and be converted, and that speedily, as a delay in this case is very dangerous : yet tho' it be very dangerous

delay repentance, as the everlasting hazard of the soul depends upon it. Men will make a thousand plausible objections against it, and think you are doing worse than robbing them, by urging this upon them : Does not this shew how deeply and deplorably mankind are fallen by original sin ; they take darkness for light, and light for darkness, they think themselves quite otherwise than in reality they are. My fellow-creatures, why should you object against a speedy repentance ? Does not the uncertainty of life loudly call upon you to repent ? Hast thou not sinned enough already, but thou must sin more and harden thy heart like an adamant ? Must God wait your time to repent ? Are not judgments abroad in the earth, earthquakes, war, pestilence, &c. ? Are not these messengers from God to warn and invite thee ? If thousands are summon'd into another world without any warning, ought not thou to repent, and prepare to meet thy God when he shall call thee ? How many of thy acquaintance have been taken off on a sudden ; and oh ! astonishing mercy, *art thou left alive* ? and yet will you plead against a speedy repentance ? Will you still go on provoking the LORD to anger ? Beware, lest in an indolent hour, you are hurled into misery : You hear of one dying in an apoplexy, another choak'd with eating, another drown'd, another murther'd, another kill'd by a fall from his horse, all of them sudden deaths, and yet you delay to repent : But I know full well why so many of you remain as you are ; it is because you deceive yourselves, you think yourselves christians already, because you've been baptiz'd, &c. But does your having been baptiz'd when you was an infant, denote you to be now a child of God ? Have you perform'd your baptismal covenant ? Have you renounc'd the world, the flesh and the devil ? If you have not, what avails your having been baptiz'd, when you are now regardless

gardless of the covenant you then made ? My dear friends, your thinking yourselves real christians is no proof of your being so, unless you have the marks, and do answer the character of a disciple of Christ : Have you then the marks of a disciple of Christ ? For instance, do you take up your croſs ? Or do you not rather lead an indolent, eaſy life ? Do you deny yourself, or do you not rather indulge yourself in every thing you can ? Do you not miſpend your time by playing at cards, by going to plays, assemblies, &c. Do not you think one good deed will atone for many sins ? and if so, do you in any respect answer the character of a disciple of Christ ? What pretenſe can you have then to happiness ? Yet you have ; because there are ſome things you do, and others you leave undone, on account of which, you truſt God will pardon and accept you at the day of judgment. What is that ? Why you read, you fay your prayers, you give a trifle to the poor, you go to church, ſometimes to the sacrament. Also you abstain from many groſs ſins, you do not get drunk, nor swear, nor defraud, &c. and therefore you expect God will reward you with a crown of endleſs glory. What prejuſtice is this ? For you have no ground whereon to build your hopes of salvation : The ſcriptures afford you none, ſo far from it, that they condemn you as a pharifee ; yea, as a telf-conceited, ſelf-righteouſeſs ſinner. And alas ! how many thousands are there of this number : 'Tis true, they read the ſcriptures but their eyes are ſo blinded that they cannot diſcern that they are guilty, miſerable ſinners. They read prayers, but they never pray in ſincerity, because they do not look for an answer to their prayers. They go to church, but it is to ſee and be ſeen, and to avoid the ſcandal of ſtaying away, and being miſled by their neighbours. They abstain from groſs ſins, because they find ſuch open ſinners diſregarded and evil

spoken

spoken of, even by their quiet neighbours. Thus they would have it, they halt, they stumble, they remain without any real, inward religion, and at last perish in their sins. They know nothing at all of inward, vital holiness, the religion of the heart, and therefore know nothing of the power of godliness. They are angry when reprov'd ; yea, they are so opinionated of themselves, of their own goodness, that they think they shall get to heaven sooner than the poor, contrite, mourning soul, who feels its misery and mourns for happiness. How often must you be told that a bare outside will not avail ? The religion of Jesus is spirit and life, it must all come from the heart, which is the seat of action, or else what signifies all this outward show and splendour : Away then with these deceitful notions, you are not as yet disciples of Christ ; your hearts are corrupt, and desperately wicked. Go then to the fountain open'd for sin and for uncleanness, and beg of Christ to shew you your heart ; its vileness, its misery, its sinfulness. No longer reason thyself into misery, but rouse from thy lethargy, for GOD will give thee strength.

To conclude, I intreat thee to profit from what is here written, and beware thou dost not reject this faithful advice ; it was wrote purely for your advantage, that thou *shouldst not perish, but have everlasting life* ; let it not then increase your condemnation, but help thee on to attain true happiness and real contentment ; that you may bear witness to the truth of my assertion, is my earnest desire ; such a witness as to be content and happy, by following the steps which I have recommended to you : And may the God of love, who longs to bleſs you, enable you to experience and say with the Apostle, *Godliness hath the promise of the life which now is, as well as that which is to come.* Amen.

